

Bevan, at the Embassy, hasn't kept his eyes open for me, as he promised," he went on a while later, "I don't know! I can understand Eugen Pattenhausen, the owl-eyed coot who runs the International Aid Society, not doing a hand's turn to aid anybody—but Bevan! For Heaven's sake, while you're there call at the Embassy and kick him."

"You forget, my dear boy," said I, with a laugh, for his news had made me light-headed, "you forget that I have entered upon a life of self-denial, and one of the luxuries I must deny myself is that of kicking attachés."

"I've a good mind to go with you and do it myself. But it'll keep. Do you know, it's rather quaint, isn't it?" he said, after a pause, as if struck by a luminous idea—"it's rather quaint that it should be I who am playing the little tin god on wheels for you two, and saying 'Bless you, my children.'"

"I thought the humour of the situation couldn't fail to strike you at last."

"Yes," said he, knitting his brows into an air of dark reflection, "it is funny. Devilish funny!"

I dismissed him with grateful words, and in a flutter of excitement went in search of Campion, whom I was lucky to find in the building.

"I'm sorry to ask for leave of absence," said I, "before I've actually taken up my appointment; but I must do so. I am summoned at once to Berlin on important business."

Campion gave willing consent. "How long will you be away?"

"That depends," said I, with a smile which I meant to be enigmatic, but assuredly must have been fatuous, "upon my powers of persuasion."

I had bright thoughts of going to Berlin and back in a meteoric flash, bringing Lola with me on my return journey, to marry her out of hand as soon as we reached